

Reconsideration and allowance of the above-referenced application are respectfully requested.

Upon entry of this amendment, claims 1-32, as amended herein, and newly-presented claims 33-74 will be pending in this case.

Claims 1-32 stand rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-31 of Applicant's U.S. Patent 5,700,333 (Yamazaki, et al.) taken alone or in combination with Zhang, et al. Applicant has amended its claims to better clarify the patentable features of its invention. The grounds of rejection are respectfully traversed.

Each of independent claims 1, 9, 17 and 25 were specifically amended to clarify that the gettering agent is added to selected regions of the semiconductor film. The '333 patent describes an alternate method where after crystallization of a silicon film, a gettering agent is implanted on the entire surface of a silicon film (shown in Fig. 2B).

Independent claims 1 and 9 further distinguish the invention in that by virtue of the way patterning is performed, an extra step of removing a gettering agent (necessary in the '333 process) is entirely avoided, making the process more efficient and faster to perform.

Zhang et al. is relied on as showing that the use of lasers to crystallize silicon was known. Applicant's specification points out that the excimer laser is preferably of a pulse radiation type.

"[F]usion and solidification occur instantaneously and repeatedly on the region irradiated with the laser. That is, a non-equilibrium state is formed by the irradiation of an excimer laser, and it realizes a state in which nickel is rendered highly mobile" (page 11, line 23 through page 12, line 1).

Hence, the claimed limitation of applying laser light prior to doping a gettering agent (such as phosphorous) cannot be ascertained from either of the cited references, taken alone or in combination. Claims 17-32 are therefore all patentable.


Newly-presented claims 33-74 include similar limitations as those in the amended independent claims and should therefore be patentable for the same reasons.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, therefore, all of the claims should be in condition for allowance. A formal notice to that effect is respectfully solicited.

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Respectfully submitted,

Date: 11-16-99

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